

For very important reasons I am strongly opposed to Bill 69, a plan to install billboards on over 500 of our buses. I believe my view is shared by the majority of residents in Honolulu.

Honolulu is currently relatively free from this visual pollution. The one exception for democracy's sake, happens every campaign season with all the yard signs we all see just about everywhere.

But you can almost hear the community give a collective sigh of relief at the end of each campaign season once all the signs are put away and are no longer visually polluting.

I and many others are concerned that by passing Bill 69, it will set the precedent of sacrificing this unique and sacred quality of life for the purpose of trying to meet a budget.

1) Department of Transportation Services Director Mike Formby has said "I've never met a person that said they went to the mainland, saw the bus system that had this advertising on it, and said the advertising was horrible and a visual blight. It just doesn't happen"

With all due respect to Mr. Formby, his observation is purely anecdotal. Having lived both in Los Angeles and Honolulu I can say that my anecdotal evidence says otherwise.

I am sure that anyone who has spent an extended time in a city like Los Angeles like I have, would agree with me that quality of life is certainly enhanced upon returning to Honolulu, without the billboards in your face everywhere you turn.

Out of over 100 Bill 69 testimonies submitted online thus far, only two are in support of this bill. I see this as strong indication of a heavy push back by the community if this bill passes.

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2) I have very serious doubts that the \$8 million of advertising revenue our Mayor Caldwell promises, will even be generated. Has there been a market study of any kind that indicates there will even be enough of a demand for advertising to raise this revenue?

I also doubt the city's ability to control the content of these ads. What if cigarette, alcohol or other unsuitable advertisers choose to challenge restrictions on buying ads?

Does our bus company want to, or is it even capable of getting in the middle of such a debate?

3) Once we start down this road, there is no turning back. Will we entertain the idea of more and bigger billboards with each and every fiscal challenge?

Are we really ready to walk away from the special quality of life that is unique to our community and allow this visual pollution?

Everyone knows you're doing your best council, but this is not the way to go.

Please do not pass Bill 69.

Mahalo,

Bert Fishman